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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/SOMALIA: IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1816

REF: STATE 74305

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On July 15, Poloffs discussed reftel points with Bob Aal, Dutch MFA Security Policy Department contact for Africa. At the request of the UN, the Dutch protected humanitarian aid convoys to Somalia this spring, but for the moment the Dutch are following the EU lead on responding to piracy and UNSCR 1816. The Dutch have prepared new procedures to respond to requests from threatened Dutch-flagged vessels. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) DUTCH SUPPORT MULTILATERAL RESPONSE TO PIRACY: Aal noted that the protection of humanitarian aid from piracy has strong support in the Dutch parliament, and that the previous three-month escort mission by the Dutch frigate HMS Eversen this spring was very successful, delivering 43 tons of food aid. The Dutch had found it easy to respond given the request of the United Nations, World Food Programme, and International Maritime Organization for escort support. With regard to implementation of UNSCR 1816, however, the Netherlands, internal deliberations are just beginning. Our "direction is unclear." The Dutch are looking for EU leadership on this issue. EU High Representative Javier Solana presented a paper last week that outlined options for responding to piracy, ranging from ESDP formal arrangements to informal coalitions of the willing. The EU discussions on the rule of law and treatment of detained pirates "are just starting." The response on detainees, jurisdiction issues, and asylum seekers would likely be left to individual EU states. Overall, the Dutch have signaled their willingness to the EU to work on this issue.

¶3. (SBU) RESPONDING TO HIJACKING OF DUTCH-FLAGGED VESSELS: On July 11, the Dutch cabinet adopted a contingency plan for responding to piracy against Dutch-flagged vessels. The cabinet approved a proposal by Transportation Minister Huizinga to designate a single office in her ministry to respond to Dutch shipping companies requesting aid. Huizinga will lead an inter-agency effort to elaborate on the contingency. The cabinet's decision responds to the May 26 hijacking of the MV Amiya Scan, a Dutch owned ship, off the coast of Somalia. The Amiya Scan was eventually released on June 25 after the owners had paid a ransom to the pirates. Gallagher